

## Common Terminologies When Talking About Water

**Algae** - Algae are microscopic plants found floating in water or attached to rocks or other substrates. To grow, they require sunlight, water, nutrients (especially nitrogen and phosphorous) and carbon dioxide. Large algal growths are often referred to as "blooms" and give off oxygen during the day. At night, they reverse the cycle and take in oxygen.

**Dissolved Oxygen (DO)** - Oxygen present in water in a dissolved form. Expressed in milligrams (mg) per liter (l) of water or as parts per million (ppm). The concentration of DO in water is affected by 1) water temperature 2) water flow 3) aquatic plants (like algae) 4) altitude 5) dissolved or suspended solids.

**pH (Parts Hydrogen)** - The value of water is a measure of the degree of its acidity or alkalinity. The pH scale ranges from 1 (very acidic) to 7 (neutral) to 14 (basic or alkaline). The best pH for living things ranges from 6.5 to 8.2.

**Pollutants** - Usually divided into two types:

- 1) **Point Source** - may be tracked to a specific source. Example: a pipe dumping waste into a stream.
- 2) **Non-point source** - arise from a number of sources. Example: runoff from city pavement

**Temperature** - Controlling factor for aquatic organisms since most are cold blooded and cannot regulate their own body temperature. The optimal temperature for aquatic organisms ranges from 5° C (41° F) to 25° C (77° F.)

**TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load)** - the total amount of a pollutant, per day, (including a margin of safety) that a water body may receive from any source (point, non point, or natural background) without exceeding the state water quality standards. Practically, the term refers to a plan or strategy to return a water body to compliance with the water quality standards and therefore fully supporting of its designated uses.

**Watershed** - The area surrounding and "shedding" or discharging water into a stream, river wetland, or lake. Sometimes called a Drainage Basin.